

# I AM NAVY MEDICINE: HOSPITAL CORPSMAN 1ST CLASS DANIEL WAGNER

By David Marks – Twentynine Palms, CA – December 18, 2019



Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Daniel Wagner stands in front of Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms.

Mentorship is obviously good. New personnel get to learn the ropes, receive lessons learned—the easy rather than the hard way—and become more capable. There's been less focus on the benefits of being a mentor. Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Daniel Wagner had planned to return to civilian life, finish his education and work toward his goal of becoming a physician. But then he was assigned as leading petty officer, supervising approximately 34 hospital corpsmen, and learned that the pull of the Hospital Corps was stronger than his desire to return to civilian life.

In his own words, the Parker, Arizona, native writes, "In 2009, I was assigned to the 1st Marine Division on the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC), Twentynine Palms, California. I deployed with 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines. Six of us were on a mounted patrol in a Mine Resistant Armor Protected Vehicle (CAT II MRAP) in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. In the middle of the night in early November, we were blown up by an improvised explosive device (IED) while out on patrol. Luckily, no one was killed in the blast. Upon our return to the battalion aid station, I was diagnosed with mild traumatic brain injury as well as pain in my lower back. We returned to Twentynine Palms in June 2010; and I began seeing Mr. Thomas Teleha at the Traumatic Brain Injury Clinic. My official diagnosis was bulging lumbar discs and a mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI) caused by the IED Blast. I was placed on limited duty and assigned to the Transient

Personnel Unit (TPU) in San Diego. The problem was, my wife and all of my possessions were in Twentynine Palms.

“The command master chief at Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms at that time was Master Chief Hospital Corpsman Rodney Ruth, who learned I had been assigned to San Diego. By the next morning, he informed me that my orders had been changed and I had been assigned to Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms. I was at NHTP on limited duty from March to December 2011. I was assigned to a neurologist at Naval Medical Center San Diego; however, my primary-care manager and the bulk of my care was received at NHTP. I received treatment for my mTBI, post-traumatic stress injury, cognitive therapy, occupational therapy, chiropractic care and physical therapy. In December, I returned to full duty and reported to the 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton.

“During my time on limited duty at NHTP, I was assigned as leading petty officer of Family Medicine and was here during the implementation of Med Home. Not only did being at the command help me recover to full duty, but my chief at the time kept teaching me and helping me to grow as a Sailor. Just before departing Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms, I was promoted to Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class and reenlisted.

“After my tour with the 1st Marine Division, I was assigned to the Tactical Training Exercise Control Group (TTECG) aboard the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center. Following that assignment, I returned to Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms, a tenant command on MCAGCC. I love being at MCAGCC. My time with TTECG allowed me to give back to the Marine Corps and help to train and mentor Sailors and Marines before they deployed around the world. I originally selected orders to NHTP to be the command where I figured I would separate from the Navy. I had, at the time, decided to get out of the Navy and knew that NHTP was a good place to be taken care of and that I would have assistance with my transition back to civilian life. I was told upon checking in that everyone in my chain of command would help me get to where I wanted to be. Being back at NHTP or more specifically the Adult Medical Care Clinic (AMCC), changed my mind. The junior Sailors that I work for are some of the hardest working men and women I know. They are not co-workers, not friends, but a family. The AMCC Sailors will joke with one another and poke fun, but at the end of the day always have each other's' backs. They continuously try and get better in their technical skills, professional knowledge, and personal lives. It's because of these Sailors that I have decided I want to remain in the Navy. It's the esprit de corps and family-style attitude that I experience every day from this command.”

Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Daniel Wagner is the leading petty officer at the Adult Medical Care Clinic, a branch clinic of Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms, where he supervises approximately 34 hospital

corpsmen. He said he originally enlisted because “my dad was Navy, my grandpa was a Marine, and it was just kind of the thing to do to join the military.”

He’s married with four children and credits the support he’s received from his wife, his family, and the support from his command for his mental and physical recovery. “If it weren’t for my wife and family, I wouldn’t be here,” he said.

Pointing to the closeness of the Hospital Corps community, Mr. Tom Teleha, who treated Wagner back in 2009, was just completing his military career as a chief hospital corpsman. Mr. Teleha is still at the AMCC and is the program manager for the Traumatic Brain Injury Clinic. In 2009, Lt. Dru Nelson was Wagner’s command chaplain in the 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines. Today, Lt. Cmdr. Dru Nelson is the command chaplain for Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms.

Story reposted here from DVIDS.